



MATAWAN-ABERDEEN CONNECTIONS

JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

Superintendent's Message

Dear Matawan-Aberdeen Regional School District Community,

January marks School Board Recognition Month, a time to honor and express our gratitude for the Matawan-Aberdeen Board of Education. As elected representatives of the community, board members volunteer countless hours to honor the desires of the community and meet the needs of MARSD students.

School boards can have a powerful effect on the students and communities they serve; we are fortunate to have a board that's focused on student voice and seeks out opportunities for community connections.

Thank you to President Sheetal Werneke, Vice President Tara Martinez, Annette Ascoli, Katie Feiles, Christopher McGovern, John Montone, Dianna M. Pell, Laurie Skop, Danielle Spruell, and Student Representative Lindsay Teubner!

You'll also notice that to continue connecting the community and the board, a section of this e-newsletter will be dedicated each month to introducing a board member. First up, you'll get to know President Sheetal Werneke.

Please join me in thanking the Board of Education. Together, we can continue to form connections that benefit MARSD students!

Sincerely,
Nelyda Perez
Superintendent of Schools



Recognize a teacher, staff member or student for Valentine's Day

Let's celebrate Valentine's Day by sending love to the MARSD community. Use [this Google form](#) to submit a shout-out to a teacher, staff member, administrator or student (past or present)!

Please note that the form will be close Feb. 13. Some messages may be used on social media.

THE HEART OF MARSD



The Heart of MARSD

Let's celebrate Valentine's Day by sending love to the MARSD community. Use this form to submit a shout-out to a teacher, staff member, administrator, or student (past or present)!

Do you want to recognize more than one person? You can submit more than one shout-out, but make sure to fill out a new form for each one.

Strategic Plan Update: Connections 2030

Matawan-Aberdeen Regional School District is planning for "Connections 2030", reaffirming our district's commitment to fostering a safe and equitable learning environment for students. The current Strategic Plan carries the district through 2027, and the district is looking forward to building upon the success achieved so far as we develop "Connections 2030", a strategic plan extension that bridges the district to 2030.

At the December meeting, Assistant Superintendent Michael Liebmann shared with the Board of Education a data dashboard that will be used to track district goals and progress reflected in the Strategic Plan. The document will be added to the website in July so that the community can stay informed about progress.

We're excited to continue sharing about "Connections 2030" over the coming months!

CONNECTIONS
2030
STRATEGIC PLAN

A Spotlight on Student Services

Lloyd Road Students Serve Up Meaningful Lessons and Connections

For students in the Multiply Disabled Class and Autism Class at Lloyd Road Elementary School, the best day of the month is café day – a day in which they serve breakfast to teachers across the school.



The preparation for that day starts weeks in advance when the seven students in the Multiply Disabled Class and the six students in the Autism Class go shopping at Shop Rite to get food and drinks for the café. They then take orders in advance from teachers and prepare bagels, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, etc. for delivery on a cart.

“For my students, this café is an opportunity to connect with general education students and teachers outside their classroom and learn important life and social skills,” said Keelyn Leonard, who teaches the Multiply Disabled Class. “From saying ‘have a good day’ to ‘thank you for ordering’, their learning social skills and communication that is so important in life.”

Michelle Sloan, who teaches the Autism Class, agreed, explaining that the students are even learning number recognition and organizational skills as they calculate and track the order forms, read classroom numbers, and bag the breakfasts for staff.

“The students are learning pre-vocational skills that will carry them through to middle school, high school, and beyond,” Sloan said. “This is the first introduction to those skills and a very important step toward their future success.”



The unique program, which started last year at Lloyd Road, has even drawn interest from special guests, like the Aberdeen Police Department and district administration who come for visits.

Leonard said that for one of her students, in particular, the café is the highlight of his month. “He looks forward to this every month,” she said. “He can’t miss it!”

What inspired you to serve on the Board of Education?

My kids. I was an extremely frustrated and vocal parent in regard to extended COVID school closures enacted by the state. Rather than simply complaining, I decided to see if I could be a voice for parents and help make a difference for all students.

Please tell us about your background and connections to the community and schools.

My husband and I have lived in the district since 2001, before we had our kids. Our daughter is a senior Accounting major at Clemson University and our son is a sophomore Engineering major at Rowan University - both speak fondly of their MARSD experiences. I have served in leadership roles at PTOs and taken part in strategic planning for the district. In my opinion, it is extremely important for families to be involved in their children's schools to any extent they are able. Involvement is proven to increase student success.



Which committees or initiatives are you most passionate about?

I am passionate about students being able to reach their full potential - not only those who need extra help but those who excel and need challenging material. In addition, absenteeism is at an all time high. My hope is for every student to find their niche and get involved so they enjoy coming to school.

What's one thing you hope the community knows about the work of the Board of Education?

It's a labor of love. We always keep students top of mind in every decision we make, and our goal is to positively impact the most students. We are continuously learning and growing by attending training and conferences with peers from across the state. And everything we do is on a volunteer basis!

FUN FACT

English is my second language. The public school system taught me everything I know and shaped my entire life, including a 7th grade teacher who told me I had a knack for writing.

CALENDAR REMINDERS

- **Feb. 3** – Early Dismissal K-8 Students
- **Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m.** – Board of Education Committee of the Whole Meeting
- **Feb. 14** – District Early Dismissal – Students & Staff

- **Feb. 17** – District Closed for President's Day
- **Feb. 20, 6:30 p.m.** – ESL Family Night
- **Feb. 27, 6:30 p.m.** - Board of Education Regular Action Meeting

[View the full calendar.](#) You can view the calendars on the new website by selecting All Calendars, or narrow your search to a specific school(s), and/or athletics

Submit an Idea for a Story

Do you have good news to share about a student, staff member, team or club? We're always looking for opportunities to share school-community connections! Use [this Google Form](#) to tell us about it. We may feature it in some way on the district's newsletter or social media!

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES



Matawan-Aberdeen Regional
School District

